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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MADRID 000094

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE

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TAGS: [KPWR](#) [MEPP](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: SPANISH FM MORATINOS BRIEFS CODEL MARTINEZ ON  
BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre, Jr. for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Spanish FM Moratinos briefed Codel Martinez on bilateral developments during an hour-long meeting January ¶11. With regard to enhanced military support in Afghanistan, Moratinos said that it would be difficult to make any commitments in advance of the Spanish March 9 elections, but that some decisions could be made at the next NATO Summit in Bucharest April 2-4. Moratinos, optimistic about renewed talks in the Middle East peace process, said that it was essential to convince Arab states that the U.S. had a balanced approach supportive of the Palestinians. He also called for continued engagement with Syria, especially to counter Iranian influence in the Middle East. He said that the U.S. and Spain should work together to encourage a credible opposition in Venezuela. Moratinos credited Spanish engagement with bringing demonstrable change in Cuba, while opining that any democratic transition would be prolonged and difficult. He emphasized that Spain and the U.S. had the same goals, while using different approaches to achieve their objectives. Moratinos also briefed the CODEL members on Spain's work to create the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative. END SUMMARY.

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OVERVIEW OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP  
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¶2. (C) Spanish FM Moratinos briefed Codel Martinez on bilateral developments during an hour long meeting January 11 at the Palacio Santa Cruz Foreign Ministry ceremonial office. Foreign Minister Moratinos warmly welcomed the delegation, noting that their presence was testament to the strength and importance of the bilateral relationship. Beginning with an overview of U.S.- Spanish relations, Moratinos said that during the last four years he had worked to overcome misunderstandings and misperceptions and that he was proud of the active joint agenda underway. His one disappointment was that a presidential-level meeting had not taken place on the margins of some multilateral event, saying, "for the 1st and 8th most important economies in the world, it (a meeting) should have happened, especially given our mutual goals and objectives." Moratinos termed Secretary Rice's 2007 visit to Madrid a "major success". He described trade and investment on both sides as excellent, particularly the work of the U.S.-Spain Council, and also praised law enforcement and military cooperation.

¶3. (C) Senator Martinez thanked Moratinos for his efforts and highlighted the upcoming U.S.-Spain Council meeting in Texas as an important opportunity to continue expanding trade

and investment, especially in the field of renewable energy. Moratinos said that Spain sought to become a world leader in renewable energy by emphasizing research and development, citing the Finnish success in telecommunications as a case study. Ambassador Westendorf said that a February 11 meeting between the U.S. Department of Energy and its Spanish counterpart, including a site visit to a Colorado research facility, would be the next cooperative program. Senator Grassley urged consideration of the benefits of genetically-modified seed, and Moratinos said that the Spanish Agriculture Minister had a more open approach than other EU countries.

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AFGHANISTAN  
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14. (C) Senator Martinez also thanked Spain for its efforts in Afghanistan, Lebanon and other peace-keeping efforts and urged further contributions. Moratinos reiterated comments made previously to other USG officials, that it would be difficult to make any commitments in advance of the Spanish March 9 elections, but that some decisions could be made at the next NATO Summit in Bucharest April 2-4. Since the overthrow of the Taliban there had been tremendous progress in Afghanistan, however, Moratinos said that President Karzai was well-intentioned but weak and that the country was fragile and underdeveloped. Seeing no good alternatives to Karzai due to structural flaws, as well as pressures imposed by warlord fiefdoms and narcotics networks, Moratinos called for better coordinated international assistance. He said Spain supported a single representative to coordinate all donor programs. Noting that engagement with Pakistan became more difficult in the wake of the Bhutto assassination, he

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said Spain would call for an international conference to review the London compact and seek a renewed political strategy to supplement the assistance package. Moratinos called the Spanish PRT a success story based on civil society development accomplishments.

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MIDDLE EAST AND IRAN  
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15. (C) Moratinos said that, "based on my extensive experience, the Middle East is a volatile region, but the key players are now working towards finalizing peace." He had just received calls from Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu Mazen and some unidentified Israeli contacts informing him that there was a Palestinian-Israeli deal to engage in direct talks. Encouraged that informal talks to define the parameters of a two-state solution would take place, Moratinos believed that the parties would take up discussions based on Taba and Camp David talks, then intensify the sessions to have Saeb Erekat and key Palestinians draft a peace treaty. Moratinos credited President Bush's personal involvement with pushing up the timetable. According to Moratinos, the Annapolis Conference was "fantastic; much better than the press credited in the news coverage." Moving forward, he said that it was essential to convince Arab states that the U.S. has a balanced approach that is supportive of the Palestinians.

16. (C) Asked about the prospect for presidential elections in Lebanon, Moratinos said it was crucial to keep Syria engaged positively. "I played an important role in convincing the Syrians to attend at Annapolis," he said, "and trying to get them to play a constructive role." Characterizing the Syrian leadership as a complex mix of old guard politicians, military authorities and President al-Asad's coterie, Moratinos said that the international community needed to encourage moderate forces in Syria. He believed Secretary Rice was more skeptical about Syria, but cautioned, "when we are faced with Iranian influence in the

region and Iraqi instability, it is essential to keep Damascus in an international coalition, especially when Hizballah is playing the Iran card."

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LATIN AMERICA UPDATE  
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¶7. (C) With twelve "more or less" democratic elections held last year in Latin America, Moratinos was optimistic about Latin America, though he cautioned that the influence of "populist" movements required individual approaches since each nation had its own unique political personalities and objectives. He described Ecuadorian President Correa as a leader trying to set himself apart, while incorporating previously dispossessed indigenous populations in the governing framework.

¶8. (C) In Bolivia, Moratinos viewed President Morales as sincere, honest and protecting the formerly marginalized indigenous factions responsible for voting him into office. Noting Spanish concerns over renegotiated contracts, he said that Morales was implementing the latest agreements and fulfilling commitments. At the same time, he acknowledged that Morales lost credibility with his fantastic assertions that the U.S. was planning a coup. Senator Martinez pushed back on Moratinos' assessment and Senator Grassley also questioned Moratinos about rule-of-law concerns in Bolivia. Moratinos excused those concerns by focusing on Morales majority win in the last election, saying that gave him the legitimacy to undertake a major shift in governance.

¶9. (C) Venezuela was a different case, said Moratinos. He called for Spain and the U.S. to work together on ways to encourage a credible opposition. Since the failure of President Chavez's most recent referendum, it was important to foster political dialogue, especially since the traditional political parties never reflected the interests of most Venezuelans. Acknowledging the positive feedback King Juan Carlos received after his sharp retort to Chavez, Moratinos said the Venezuelan government had asked for an apology, but "no way" would that happen.

¶10. (C) Describing Cuba as in a transition period, Moratinos said Raul Castro told him that Fidel Castro was no longer in power. While the speech by Raul Castro calling for

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economic reform was a positive indicator, Moratinos said that the January 20 elections would be an important benchmark. His guess was that Fidel Castro would not be re-elected. Spain will also watch with interest the Vatican Secretary of State visit as well as Brazilian President Lula's trip to Havana. Recognizing the U.S. was not pleased with Spanish policy towards Cuba, Moratinos said that he tried to convince Secretary Rice that our goals were the same and that our

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different approaches actually added up to a more effective strategy. Moratinos opined that democratic transition in Cuba would not take place as quickly as it did in Poland or the Czech Republic; it would be much more prolonged and difficult. Spain encouraged Cuba to free a large number of political prisoners through a human rights dialogue. As a result of Spanish engagement, Cuba announced that it would permit Spanish NGOs to operate locally, thereby strengthening civil society ties. In addition, the Catholic church was working to increase the level of political debate and social engagement towards democratic reform.

¶11. (C) Moratinos' assessment was that the U.S. inflexible approach had not shown any results over the long term, but after three or four years of Moratinos' engagement, there had been demonstrable shifts in Cuban policy. He said that the Spanish-U.S. alliance, working together and trusting each other, must use all tools at its disposal, intimating that

"good cop/bad cop" teamwork might get the most results. Questioning the U.S. continuing demarches about Spanish engagement with Cuba, Moratinos said, "Are you going to criticize Lula for going to Havana? I guarantee he won't see any dissidents during his visit and yet you crucified me when I went to Havana." Senator Martinez reminded Moratinos of a wide variety of factors, apart from Spanish engagement, that contributed to a shift in Cuban policy, including the deteriorating health of Fidel Castro. Respecting Spanish intentions, it was crucial to honor the sacrifices and encourage the efforts of the Cuban opposition. Caving to the demands of the Cuban government that Spanish officials not meet with dissidents did not advance the interests of promoting civil society and democracy. The well-being of all Cubans should be a primary concern, especially now that there are reports that repression in Cuba was worse than ever. Despite cosmetic actions, Cuba needed to undertake reforms to secure fundamental freedoms as a precursor to any future elections. Senator Martinez expressed hope that instead of settling for just economic reforms, like the China model that features some cosmetic change but does not secure democracy and individual freedom, Spain would work with us to bring genuine political change that guaranteed basic individual freedoms of speech and assembly for Cubans. The Cuban regime must stop repression, release all political prisoners and allow political space that would lead eventually to elections.

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ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS  
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¶12. (U) At the conclusion of the briefing, Moratinos made a pitch for Spain's work organizing the Alliance of Civilizations as an UN initiative. He said that the March 11,2004 bombing at the Madrid train station further heightened Spain's determination to confront terrorist threats. At the same time, Spain believed that there was an unfair perception that Muslim/Arab countries were linked with terrorism. Given Spain's historical ties with the Muslim world, it decided to focus on unity of interests. Moratinos believed that the existing UN framework based on development and human rights committees did not provide the appropriate venue, so the AOC is a new pillar based on broad cultural ties to include rule-of-law, democracy, model economies, education, media, and youth. At the AOC forum in Madrid the week of January 14, Moratinos expected over 400 international delegates including four prime ministers and 33 foreign ministers.

¶13. (C) Moratinos regretted that he would be unable to join CODEL Martinez for dinner with the members of the U.S.-Spain Council at the Ambassador's residence, but he had a previous commitment to participant in a PSOE campaign strategy session that evening.

¶14. (U) Meeting participants included:

SPAIN

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FM Miguel Angel Moratinos  
Spanish Ambassador to the U.S. Carlos Westendorf  
Jose Maria Pons, Director General for Europe and North America  
Manuel Cacho, Director General of External Communications  
Victoria Ortego, Special Assistant to FM Moratinos

U.S.  
Ambassador Aguirre  
Senator Mel Martinez  
Senator Charles Grassley  
Senator John Thune  
Senator Larry Craig  
John Goetchius, Legislative Assistant to Senator Martinez  
Poloff, Embassy Notetaker

¶15. (U) Senator Martinez cleared this message.

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